

Tips for Healthy Holiday Eating

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The holiday season is a time to celebrate with family and friends. Unfortunately, for many it also becomes a time for over-eating and weight gain. According to the National Institutes of Health, holiday eating can result in an extra pound or two every year. Over a lifetime, holiday weight gain can really add up. The holidays don't have to mean weight gain. Focus on a healthy balance of food, activity, and fun. By implementing a few simple tips you can stay healthy through the holiday season.

Ten Tips for Healthy Holiday Eating

1. Be realistic. Don't try to lose pounds during the holidays, instead try to maintain your current weight.
2. Plan time for exercise. Exercise helps relieve holiday stress and prevent weight gain. A moderate and daily increase in exercise can help partially offset increased holiday eating. Try 10- or 15-minute brisk walks twice a day.
3. Don't skip meals. Before leaving for a party, eat a light snack like raw vegetables or a piece of fruit to curb your appetite. You will be less tempted to over-indulge.
4. Survey party buffets before filling your plate. Choose your favorite foods and skip your least favorite. Include vegetables and fruits to keep your plate balanced.
5. Eat until you are satisfied, not stuffed. Savor your favorite holiday treats while eating small portions. Sit down, get comfortable, and enjoy.
6. Be careful with beverages. Alcohol can lessen inhibitions and induce overeating; non-alcoholic beverages can be full of calories and sugar.
7. If you overeat at one meal go light on the next. It takes 500 calories per day (or 3,500 calories per week) above your normal/maintenance consumption to gain one pound. It is impossible to gain weight from one piece of pie!
8. Take the focus off food. Turn candy and cookie making time into non-edible projects like making wreaths, dough art decorations or a gingerbread house. Plan group activities with family and friends that aren't all about food. Try serving a holiday meal to the community, playing games or going on a walking tour of decorated homes.
9. Bring your own healthy dish to a holiday gathering.

10. Practice Healthy Holiday Cooking. Preparing favorite dishes lower in fat and calories will help promote healthy holiday eating. Incorporate some of these simple-cooking tips in traditional holiday recipes to make them healthier.

- Gravy — Refrigerate the gravy to harden fat. Skim the fat off. This will save a whopping 56 gm of fat per cup.
- Dressing — Use a little less bread and add more onions, garlic, celery, and vegetables. Add fruits such as cranberries or apples. Moisten or flavor with low fat low sodium chicken or vegetable broth and applesauce.
- Turkey – Enjoy delicious, roasted turkey breast without the skin and save 11 grams of saturated fat per 3 oz serving.
- Green Bean Casserole — Cook fresh green beans with chunks of potatoes instead of cream soup. Top with almonds instead of fried onion rings.
- Mashed Potato — Use skim milk, chicken broth, garlic or garlic powder, and Parmesan cheese instead of whole milk and butter.
- Quick Holiday Nog — Four bananas, 1-1/2 cups skim milk or soymilk, 1-1/2 cups plain nonfat yogurt, 1/4 teaspoon rum extract, and ground nutmeg. Blend all ingredients except nutmeg. Puree until smooth. Top with nutmeg.
- Desserts — Make a crustless pumpkin pie. Substitute two egg whites for each whole egg in baked recipes. Replace heavy cream with evaporated skim milk in cheesecakes and cream pies. Top cakes with fresh fruit, fruit sauce, or a sprinkle of powdered sugar instead of fattening frosting.

Enjoy the holidays, plan a time for activity, incorporate healthy recipes into your holiday meals, and don't restrict yourself from enjoying your favorite holiday foods. In the long run, your mind and body will thank you.

<http://www.cpmc.org/about/e-health/11-05%20healthy-holidays.html>